

SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Official Organ of the Saint Louis Bird Club
for the Promotion of
Bird Enjoyment, Bird Study and Bird Conservation

Vol. 2

April 12, 1933

Number 4

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THE JULIUS HURTER COLLECTION OF BIRDS

The small but valuable collection of mounted birds, collected by the late Julius Hurter of this city, is in charge of the St. Louis Bird Club and has been for some time in storage in the Masonic Temple awaiting a time when it can be prepared for public exhibition. Recently Professor Rudolf Bennett, of the Department of Zoology, University of Missouri, made an examination of the collection and has prepared a list of species and subspecies. It is an impressive document, including a number of specimens taken in the vicinity of St. Louis, now rarely or never seen. Effort should be made to bring the Hurter Collection into use again at an early date. Cases are provided, but the specimens must be cleaned and properly arranged for exhibition, and labels supplied where missing. There is a place in the Masonic Temple where this important and attractive natural history group can be installed and be seen by visitors throughout the day. R. J. Terry.

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LOOSE-LEAF N. Y. BIRD PLATES

In seeking a means by which the color plates of the birds of New York might be carried in the field the following plan was tried: Two 8.5 by 5.5 inch loose leaf note-books, which had one inch rings for holding the sheets, were procured to hold the mounted plates. Paste, glue or mucilage would not be suitable to hold the color plates to their loose-leaf support, as these materials cause wrinkling and warping, and produce a messy appearance. Kodak dry mounting tissue was found to be best for this purpose. This comes in rolls of various widths and lengths, and can be secured from (continued on page 16)

BIRD CLUB PROGRAM

THE ANNUAL MEETING of our Club will be held April 19, 1933, at Cabanne Library, 8 p.m. Reports of Officers and Committees will be rendered and new Officers elected and installed. A discussion of policy, program and field of the Bulletin was made an order of the day at the March meeting. Every member will please be present. All bird lovers are invited. Annual Meetings often are our most interesting occasions.

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BIRD WALKS

Mr. Barrell will lead the Shaw Garden Bird Walks, leaving the Main Entrance at 7.30 each Saturday morning during the balance of April.

The Forest Park Bird Walks will leave the Jefferson Memorial at 8.30 a.m., with the following leaders:

April 15, Miss Helen Dykeman
April 22, Mr. George C. Mackay
April 29, Mr. Luther Ely Smith
The Creve Coeur all-day walk will be on May 6, 1933.

April 12, 1933

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Published monthly except July, August and September, on the second Wednesday. Price \$1.00 a year in advance, free to paid-up members of the Club. Subscription begins with the January number.

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EDITORIAL

At the ANNUAL MEETING one year ago the issuance of this Bulletin was authorized. It was ably launched by Mr. N. R. Barger. Several topics were proposed, namely, the Starling, the European Tree Sparrow and the Winter Habitat of the Red-headed Woodpecker, which were given prominence respectively in the June, March and April Numbers. Prescribed projects have already proved profitable. What special subjects will you choose for the ensuing year? Tell us April 19, at 8 p.m.

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PERSONAL

Mr. Otto Widmann read a paper on the Winter Habitats of the Red-headed Woodpecker before the St. Louis Naturalists' Club, March 25, 1933.

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MORE ABOUT THE ALBINO ROBIN

Mrs. Paul V. Janis, Mrs. D. W. Roberts and Miss Ruth Davis had an excellent view of the albino Robin noted in this Bulletin last month, in St. Paul's Cemetery, Affton, Mo., Feb. 19.

Mr. Walter G. Berry, Edina, Mo., reports having observed an albino Robin two successive seasons in one locality in Kentucky, fifty years ago.

Miss Mary Perry, Grinnell College, Ia., found mention of an albino Robin in an Iowa newspaper and wrote to know if it might be the Webster bird.

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(Loose-Leaf Plates, con.)

camera supply houses such as Erker's and Schiller's. To mount completely all of these plates requires about 200 loose leaves and between 10 and 15 yards of 20-inch width dry mounting tissue.

The actual mounting is as follows: The 20-inch roll of dry mounting tissue is cut in the center with a sharp knife, giving two rolls 10 inches wide. This width is easy to handle and except for very few plates is of ample width. A plate is turned face down and then sufficient mounting tissue is placed on the back and tacked into position by touching it with a hot iron. Care must be taken that the iron is neither too hot nor too cold, or trouble will result. Follow the directions that come with the tissue very carefully.

With a pair of sharp scissors, cut out that portion of the plate that you wish to mount. Place on a loose-leaf sheet and then iron it into position. The printed name of the bird or group of birds is likewise mounted on the sheet. Further to protect each loose-leaf sheet, each hole is reinforced by Dennison's gummed reinforcements.

In cutting out the birds with scissors, care should be exercised to leave as much of the scenery as possible. It will be found that with a little care, New York plates No. 2 and 3, and a few others, can be mounted without cutting out individuals.

Plates such as 24, 25, 26 and 27 should be cut across the center and each half mounted on a loose-leaf sheet so that it faces the other half; should the individual birds be cut out half of them would be ruined.

After numbering the pages and indexing them, these books will be found very convenient and useful in the field. There is an added advantage in that as new plates are secured, they can be added, and those not wanted can be removed.

Donald M. Hetler.

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A Wilson Snipe was flushed from rolling bramble and grass land near Deer Creek, York Village, March 19.

E. A. S.

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April 12, 1933

WIDMANN COLUMN

The first two or three weeks of March have always been a poor time for the student of land birds. In 1834, when reporting to the Biological Survey on bird migration, I called this period "Second winter with dark skies and cold northerly winds." After a short warm spell in February, when there is always an obvious movement of species that winter in the southern states, March comes in with frosty nights that cause a standstill in migration and keep vegetation back, much to its benefit, for a great advance would be harmful. We had such an experience in 1907 when a series of seven almost consecutive days with 80 to 90° (from March 18 to 28) pushed vegetation to a degree of development never seen before the end of April. When April came, the first half of the month (1-17) brought hard frost which killed all tender parts of plants. All progress remained at a standstill till early May, leaving hickories without leaves, and sycamores were still thinly clothed in the month of June. This year's March behaved normally and ignored a sudden rise in temperature to 85° on the 13th. By March 15 the aspect of nature was still wintry, still waiting for the warm rain which usually inaugurates Spring in our region. Robins were still in big flocks, joined by troops of Meadowlarks and Starlings, but no Flickers yet, and Grackles have not taken up their old haunts probably waiting for the arrival of the fair sex. As an early arrival must be considered the first Thrasher which I saw on Monday, March 13 in Clayton. As I can match this date with the same in 1832 and have two records for March 14 in 1830 and 1911, I cannot call it unprecedented, beaten even by two records from Kirkwood by Miss Clarke March 4, 1901 and March 11, 1911; also one by Dr. Terry on March 10, 1929 from Valley Park. Maybe there are many other dates for St. Louis, as some Thrashers winter in southern Missouri. I met one in January, 1896, in Dunklin Co., Mo. It was partly albino, having a perfectly white nape and hind neck, thus appear-

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ing to carry a load of snow on its back.

March 15, 1933.

On the Red-headed Woodpecker I have only a few dates myself, but I think some of Mr. I. C. Adams jr.'s notes are worth using, as they are really instructive, particularly his experience with the fluctuation of numbers, making counting difficult. I wrote him I would give his letter to you to let you select what you see fit for the occasion. My dates are the following:

1932: Oct. 19, Hampton Park, 1; 21, McKelvey Road, 1.

Nov. 2, Hampton Park, 2; 25, 2 or 3.

Dec. 5, Hampton Park, 2; 13, Belnor, 1; 21, Webster Groves, 2; 28, 1.

1933: Jan. 9, Festus, 1; 16, Hampton Park, 2.

March 17, Horton Place, 1; Richmond Heights, 1; 28, Hampton Park, 2.

March 29, 1933. O. Widmann.

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RED-HEADED WOODPECKER NOTES FROM LETTER from Mr. I. C. Adams jr., Columbia, Mo., March 20, 1933.

"On Jan. 28, Adrian Hatton and I went to Bagnell Dam. On the way we saw several Red-heads from the car. At the lake we made a trip of about 2 mi. along the shore and up in the woods back from the lake. Red-heads were here in numbers. We estimate we saw or heard about 30. On the way back we stopped in the Osage River bottom about 6 mi. northwest of Tuscomb. There was a grove of pecan trees here. We saw from 6 to 10 Red-heads here. For the whole trip the Red-heads numbered about 45.

"Feb. 16, about 6 seen along road on trip to Springfield, Mo.; 18, 1 seen in Zoo Park, Springfield; 20, several seen at Bagnell Dam and along road.

"March 1, 30; 4, 17; 8, 20; 11, 32; 15, 26 - All these (Mar. 1-15) are from the same area. The fluctuation of numbers is caused by the difficulty in counting. On some days they are noisy and more active, while on other days the birds are silent and less active and I get a lower count, though the actual number of birds present can be the same on each day.

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"There are four parts to this area: open woodland with weeds; open woodland with pasture and stream; brush with invading trees; deep woods. The deep woods is an absolute oak grove. * * * I counted the trees on the south side of the stream. There were 299 plus some small trees under 16 feet: Walnut, 163; Oak (about 90% white oak and only one tree of Shingle Oak), 59; Elm, 25; Honey Locust, 11; Shag-bark Hickory, 14; Indian Cherry, 7; Osage Orange, 1; Maple, 2; Pignut Hickory, 8; Sycamore, 3; Hackberry, 3; not identified, 1; dead stubs, 2.

"Redheads are seen in all four parts but are most abundant in the open woodland with pasture and the deep woods. I have seen several places around Columbia that to me seem just as suited for Red-heads, but no Red-heads."

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The following Red-headed Woodpeckers were observed in oak woods in the following counties of Missouri, March 8, 1933:

St. Louis, 1; Franklin, 2; Crawford, 2; Phelps, 3; Pulaski, 4; Maries, 1; Osage, 2; Gasconade, 2. R. J. Terry

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WINTERING OF RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS

Forest Park, St. Louis, Dec. 19, '32, one, near new southwest pond; Mar. 19, '33, one, on golf links southwest of Art Museum. D. M. Hetler.

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FIELD OBSERVATIONS

A Wilson Snipe was observed in bed of old pond, Crescent, Mo., March 25, 1933. R. J. Terry.

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FOREST PARK, ST. LOUIS, Mar. 12 and 19.

Eastern Sparrow Hawk, 12; ♀, 19
Eastern Bob-white, 12, 12; 15, 19
Eastern Belted Kingfisher, 12; 19
Northern Flicker, 12; 19
Red-headed Woodpecker, 19
Northern Hairy Woodpecker, 12; 19
Northern Downy Woodpecker, 12; 19
Eastern Phoebe, 19
Eastern Blue Jay, 12; 19
Eastern Crow, 12; 19
Black-capped Chickadee, 12; 19
Carolina Chickadee, 19
Tufted Titmouse, 12; 19

Nuthatch, 12; 19
Brown Creeper, 19
Eastern Mockingbird, 12; 19
Eastern Robin, 12; 19
Eastern Bluebird, 12; 19
Migrant Shrike, 19
Starling, 2 pair, 19
English Sparrow, 12; 19
Eastern Meadowlark, 12; 19
Eastern Red-wing, 12; 19
Rusty Blackbird, 12; 19
Bronzed Grackle, 19
Eastern Cardinal, 12; 19
Eastern Goldfinch, 12; 19
Red-eyed Towhee, 19
Slate-colored Junco, 12, 19
Eastern Chipping Sparrow, 19
Eastern Field Sparrow, 19
Eastern White-throated Sparrow, 19
Eastern Fox Sparrow, 12; 19
Eastern Song Sparrow, 12; 19

Donald M. Hetler.

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MERAMEC STATE PARK, MO., March 26, 1933, Dr. R. J. Terry, and April 2, 11.45 a. m. to 2.30 p. m., light N.W. wind, cool, fair to cloudy, Dr. and Mrs. Terry, Miss Barbara Cousland and Mr. Luther Ely Smith, observers.

Turkey Vulture, 26; 2
Hawk (Broad-winged?), 2
Eastern Sparrow Hawk, 26
Sandpiper (sp.?)
Eastern Belted Kingfisher, 26; 2
Northern Flicker, 26; 2
Red-bellied Woodpecker, 26; 2
Red-headed Woodpecker, 26; 2
Northern Downy Woodpecker, 26; 2
Eastern Phoebe, 26; 2
Horned Lark, 26
Tree Swallow, 2
Northern Blue Jay, 26; 2
Eastern Crow, 26; 2
Black-capped Chickadee, 26(?); 2
Tufted Titmouse, 26; 2
White-breasted Nuthatch, 2
Brown Creeper, 26; 2
Bewick's Wren, 2
Carolina Wren, 2
Eastern Mockingbird, 26
Brown Thrasher, 26
Eastern Robin, 26; 2
Eastern Bluebird, 26; 2
Myrtle Warbler, 2
Northern Water-Thrush, 2
English Sparrow, 2

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Eastern Meadowlark, 26; 2
Eastern Red-wing, 26
Eastern Cowbird, 26
Bronzed Grackle, 26; 2
Eastern Cardinal, 26; 2
Common Redpoll, 26
Eastern Goldfinch, 26; 2
Red-eyed Towhee, 26
Slate-colored Junco, 26; 2
Eastern Chipping Sparrow, 26; 2
Eastern Field Sparrow, 26; 2
Eastern Fox Sparrow, 26.

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BIRD ITEMS

On March 4th, a county resident prepared a garden plot much to the joy of a pair of Bluebirds and a plump Robin who kept a few feet behind him and had an interesting battle for the possession of every bug their sharp eyes detected. The Bluebirds are apparently the same which nested in the house last summer, and the Robin spent the winter in the yard. In fact, he is so friendly that one has to walk around him if he happens to be in the path. During the snow and sleet he fed on "table scraps", but as soon as the thawing disclosed a tiny patch of lawn, he was right there, "chippery" as ever, to look for insects.

Any day we expect to witness a battle royal between the Bluebirds and English Sparrows for final possession of last year's bluebird house. C. H.

-o-

Our feeding, or filling, station is an old nail keg turned on its side and wedged between two posts, one of which is a "clothes-line" post. Just enough of the ends are left to prevent the food from blowing or rolling out of the keg. About three feet above it on one post, is fastened a large piece of suet which has been visited daily by Red-bellied, Hairy, and Downy Woodpeckers, also Nuthatches and Jays.

The English Sparrows discovered the food in the keg, and their noise advertised it to a large Blue Jay. After investigating it, he left only to return with a flock of his companions who became daily visitors. A pair of Cardinals also partook of the sunflower seeds but never alone, for the ubiquitous English Sparrows followed

them like shadows. As soon as a Jay appeared on the scene, the Cardinals retreated to another part of the yard to feed on the ground.

While feeding, the Cardinals remained in the keg for they cracked the seeds with their beaks and let the hulls fall as they ate the kernels. The Jays entered, carried a seed to the end of the keg, held it down firmly with the inner toe of each foot while they pounded it with their beaks to crack it. They faced outward. The Red-bellied Woodpeckers frequently flew down from the suet to get a seed. They also carried it to the end, but perched on the rim and faced the interior while holding it fast with the inner toes and cracking it with their beaks. The acrobatic Chickadee and Titmouse would fly into the keg, snatch a seed with the bill, skip through the air to a slender twig on the cherry tree, where they held it firmly with the inner toes while cracking it with their beaks. These two were the only ones brave enough to snatch seeds while squirrels were present.

Usually the Cardinals arrived between six and seven in the morning, but on many occasions it was observed that when they fed continuously throughout the day, there was blustery weather within twenty-four hours. In this they proved reliable weather prophets.

Clara Heising, Kirkwood.

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WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN

"My brother in Illinois has Wren houses on his porches. At their nesting season, a Sparrow was constantly worrying Jenny, getting on the little perch, poking his head into the entrance hole. Billy Wren would fly around, fussy and noisy. The Sparrow was persistent in his teasing these Wrens.

"At noon one day the Sparrow was found dangling, dead on the box. A horse hair was found around the Sparrow's neck, the other end on the inside of the box. Billy Wren on top, of the bird box, seemed gleeful. Now did those Wrens hang that Sparrow, or was it a happy accident? A true story just the same." L. H. Behrens.